



# Department of Homeland Security Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 04 March 2004

Current Nationwide  
Threat Level is



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## Daily Overview

- The Desert Sun reports the California State Attorney General's office has issued an identity theft alert stemming from a recent scam in Michigan where identity thieves may be posing as government officials. (See item [8](#))
- NBC News reports federal investigators are looking into a new type of crime in which the criminal steals credit card information from pay-at-the-pump gas stations. (See item [11](#))
- FOX News reports a previously unknown terrorist group, identified as AZF, is threatening to blow up French railway tracks unless it is paid millions of dollars. (See item [15](#))

### DHS/IAIP Update *Fast Jump*

Production Industries: [Energy](#); [Chemical](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#)

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## Energy Sector

**Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: Elevated, Cyber: Elevated**

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://esisac.com>]

1. *March 03, Dow Jones Business News* — Nuclear industry must guard against complacency says regulator. The partial meltdown of a Three Mile Island reactor in central Pennsylvania 25 years ago caught the nuclear industry off guard and spurred regulators to improve communications, emergency procedures and worker training, members of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said Wednesday, March 3. Still, regulators and companies must remain vigilant and continue fighting complacency, which contributed to both that accident and to the more recent problems at the Davis-Besse

**reactor in Ohio, the commissioners said.** "I do believe programs need to be systematically monitored, and industry must play a role in preventing complacency from creeping in," NRC Chairman Nils Diaz said. The meltdown at Three Mile Island Unit 2 on March 28, 1979 was preventable and caused by a combination of human and technological errors, the NRC said. Since then, the industry has tried to prepare control room operators for unusual events by using simulators, developing clear procedures for certain conditions and limiting the number of overtime hours they can work, the commissioners said. The NRC said it has also worked to improve its internal and external communication system.

Source: [http://biz.yahoo.com/djus/040303/1515000815\\_2.html](http://biz.yahoo.com/djus/040303/1515000815_2.html)

2. *March 02, Business Courier (OH)* — **Utility to offer Internet over power lines. Cinergy Corp. is partnering with a Maryland firm to become the first utility in the nation to offer customers high-speed Internet over its power lines.** At first, the companies will offer just high-speed Internet, but eventually they will bundle the service with voice over IP technology, which allows customers to use the Internet for telephone services. **Called BPL, or broadband over power line, the high-speed access gives customers "always on" service from power outlets in the home or business.** Cinergy said there is no need to add any in-home wiring. Cinergy said that Cincinnati, OH, customers will be the first to have access to the services.  
Source: [http://cincinnati.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/stories/2004/03/01/daily15.html?jst=b\\_in\\_hl](http://cincinnati.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/stories/2004/03/01/daily15.html?jst=b_in_hl)
3. *March 02, New York Times* — **New York's grid not at fault in blackout according to state board.** The New York State power grid performed properly and did not contribute to the blackout on August 14, according to an initial report released Monday, March 1, by a state regulatory agency. The report did not explain why, if the grid functioned properly in New York, the state was nonetheless vulnerable to the largest blackout in North American history, a cascading loss of power that affected millions of people in eight states and Canada. William M. Flynn, chairman of the state's Public Service Commission, which conducted the review, said in a written statement that there was no evidence of failures in the operation of the grid in New York. **The report found that New York utilities and regulators had aggressively applied lessons learned from prior blackouts, and it complimented the New York utilities for restoring power within 30 hours. The report also emphasized the need for utilities to explore backup sources of power.** A final version of the report is expected in the next few months. Flynn said he expected it to include an analysis of the electric system and the state's ability to withstand external power surges.  
Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/02/nyregion/02blackout.html>
4. *March 02, Reuters* — **California adding more power lines to unclog grid. California energy planners said on Tuesday, March 1, they were making progress toward adding power lines to the state's congested electric grid but they must find better ways to work with federal officials and nearby states to identify and build badly needed projects.** Officials from three California agencies — Energy Commission, Public Utilities Commission, and Power Authority — met in Sacramento to review the state's Energy Action Plan. The plan was designed last year to ensure the state has reasonably priced power and natural gas supplies and to add more renewable energy resources like solar and wind power. Officials from the three agencies said they must develop better tools to measure the costs and benefits of power projects and streamline regulatory reviews by the PUC and Independent System Operator, the state's

grid manager. There also should be more grid coordination with neighboring states and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, they said. **Grid congestion was a major contributor to California's power emergency in 2000–2001.**

Source: [http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma\\_newsarticle1\\_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters\\_pma\\_2004\\_03\\_02\\_eng-reuters\\_pma\\_CALIFORNIA-ADDING-MORE-POWER-LINES-TO-UNCLOG-GRID&SMContentSet=0](http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma_newsarticle1_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters_pma_2004_03_02_eng-reuters_pma_CALIFORNIA-ADDING-MORE-POWER-LINES-TO-UNCLOG-GRID&SMContentSet=0)

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## **Chemical Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Defense Industrial Base Sector**

### **5. *March 03, USNORTHCOM* — JPEN shares antiterrorism information across U.S.**

Northern Command's arsenal for deterring, preventing and defeating terrorism now includes an information sharing system with the capability of immediate dissemination of antiterrorism and force protection information. **Known as the Joint Protection Enterprise Network (JPEN), the system allows authorized subscribers to immediately share antiterrorism and force protection events with Department of Defense installations, operations centers and intelligence activities enabling them to make more timely and informed decisions.** "JPEN represents a significant ability to quickly share vital antiterrorism information in direct support to those on the front lines of force protection throughout this country," said Major General Dale Meyerrose, USNORTHCOM director of architectures and integration. Noting homeland defense relies on actionable intelligence sharing at all government levels, Meyerrose said the information sharing culture must change from "the need to know to the need to share."

**Information shared in JPEN includes reports of suspected surveillance of military facilities; elicitation attempts and suspicious questioning; tests of security; unusual repetitive activities; bomb threats; and other suspicious activity.**

Source: <http://www.northcom.mil/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.showstory&storyid=0D29AE2F-BB46-C008-83F7D4824F0B3E2F>

### **6. *March 02, CongressDaily* — Navy chief plans to reduce sailor numbers by 2009. Chief of Naval Operations Vern Clark said Tuesday, March 2, he intends to cut the Navy by nearly 50,000 personnel over five years in a move toward more manpower-efficient weapons.** "I am actively pursuing a Navy with more capability with fewer sailors," Clark said. Clark said he can save up to \$1.5 billion a year for every 10,000 personnel he cuts and needs to use that money to buy the next generation of ships and aircraft. However, Clark said he did not anticipate canceling any ongoing weapons. Clark said he is retiring older ships — such as Los Angeles-class attack submarines and Spruance-class destroyers — and aircraft at an accelerated rate to cut operations and maintenance costs.

Source: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0304/030204cdpm2.htm>

7.

*March 01, Bloomberg News* — **Air Force gives F/A-22 poor marks. The F/A-22 fighter jet is lagging the flight-test goals necessary to proceed into combat testing, because of software malfunctions and reliability problems, a U.S. Air Force official said.** The aircraft, in its preliminary test phase, has not generated enough flights to train the number of pilots needed for the more rigorous phase scheduled to begin in April, officials said. The contractor said it is making improvements. Pentagon officials will decide March 22 whether the \$71 billion program can enter the next testing — a crucial phase that's already been delayed three times since 2001. "We have found in acceptance testing and initial flight testing that some parts are failing that we didn't expect to," Air Force Major General Mark Welsh, director of fighter and bomber programs said. **The aircraft can't proceed into the next phase unless improvements are demonstrated this next month, he said. The F/A-22 is being designed to replace the F-15C as the top U.S. air-to-air fighter.** The program was conceived during the Cold War to counter Soviet MiG jets.

Source: <http://www.dfw.com/mld/dfw/news/8080640.htm>

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## **Banking and Finance Sector**

8. *March 03, The Desert Sun (CA)* — **Identity thieves may be posing as government officials.** The California State Attorney General's office has issued an identity theft alert stemming from a recent scam in Michigan. **Some taxpayers in Michigan have received e-mail notices from non-Internal Revenue Service sources claiming they are being audited and must complete a questionnaire within 48 hours to avoid financial penalties, according to the Attorney General's office.** The taxpayer is asked for his or her Social Security number, bank account numbers and other confidential information. Authorities believe this is a possible identity theft attempt.

Source: [http://www.thedesertsun.com/news/stories2004/local/200403030\\_05152.shtml](http://www.thedesertsun.com/news/stories2004/local/200403030_05152.shtml)

9. *March 03, ZDNet Australia* — **Phishing scam considered most devious ever.** An e-mail attempting to trick Australian online-banking customers into divulging their details has been labeled the most 'devious' example that an antivirus vendor has encountered. The e-mail, distributed en-masse to Westpac customers, represents the latest example of "phishing scams," designed to fool people into divulging their online-banking security details. **Unlike other phishing scams that re-direct victims to fake Websites, the new scam incorporates phrasing and wording that the bank's customers would be familiar with from previous authentic advisories it had issued,** such as: "Westpac will never ask for your personal or login details by e-mail" — even though it then proceeds to direct the reader to do just that. The architects of the latest scam also adopted a more insidious Web re-direction technique to fool victims. **Activating the link in the e-mail directs the victim to a fake version of the site but also opens an authentic copy of the site in a second browser window behind it.** The fake version of the site asks for the victim's account access details but returns an error message if he or she attempts to use it. The victim is then sent to the real site unaware that they've been duped.

Source: <http://news.zdnet.co.uk/internet/security/0,39020375,3914797,9,00.htm>

*March 03, CBC Montreal (Canada)* — **Multi-million counterfeit operation busted.** A joint operation between the RCMP and the U.S. secret service led to one of the largest seizures of counterfeit money in Quebec history Friday, February 27, at a printing plant in Dorval, Canada. The Mounties and the secret service seized more than \$3 million in forged U.S. bills. **RCMP Sergeant André Bacon said that what is unique about this case is the type of equipment, an offset press, used to make the counterfeit money. "The majority of the counterfeit notes that we do seize are made using computer technology and normally are of poor quality," said Bacon. "These ones, obviously they've invested time and money in their equipment."** Bacon said the high cost of making quality counterfeit money is usually enough to deter criminals. He said the equipment seized at the printing plant in Dorval last Friday is worth at least \$100,000.

Source: [http://montreal.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=qc\\_cou nterfeit20040303](http://montreal.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=qc_cou nterfeit20040303)

**11. *March 02, NBC4.com (Washington, DC)* — Credit card numbers stolen at gas pumps.**

Federal investigators are looking into a new type of crime in which the criminal steals credit card information from pay-at-the-pump gas stations. The U.S. Secret Service reports the new type of identity theft has been reported at gas stations in California and Florida. **In each case, the crooks got inside the electronics of the pump using a universal pass key. Once inside, they attached a small electronic device called a skimmer to the internal circuitry. The skimmer stores the number of every credit card that is swiped.** A few days later, the crook returns to the pump, removes his skimmer, then uses the numbers to produce credit cards with legitimate numbers and expiration dates.

Source: <http://www.nbc4.com/money/2891885/detail.html>

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## **Transportation Sector**

**12. *March 03, Albuquerque Journal (New Mexico)* — Smart bridges.** What if a highway bridge could actually tell you it was wearing out? Or, how about a building that could warn its owners of unseen structural damage after an earthquake? **That's what researchers from New Mexico State University hope to produce by embedding high-tech optical sensors in concrete beams. The six 90-ton beams, each with 120 sensors, will support the westbound lanes of the Interstate 10 overpass at University Avenue in Las Cruces, expected to be completed in July.** When the bridge is complete, the sensors will give federal and state highway departments feedback about the performance of its design, the new high-performance concrete it is made of, and its structural soundness as it ages, says NMSU professor of civil engineering Rola Idriss. The bridge will be the first of its kind in the country, Idriss says. The total cost of the Las Cruces project, which began last summer, is about \$6.3 million. As the expected lifespan of concrete bridges has gone from about 50 years in the Interstate system's early days to nearly 80, builders are seeking better data on bridge conditions. About 20 of the 560,000 major highway bridges in the U.S. have some sort of onboard sensors to detect changes, vibration and other factors, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

Source: [http://cnniw.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnniw/Story.nsp?story\\_id=47868099&ID=cnniw&scategory=Transportation:Highway&](http://cnniw.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnniw/Story.nsp?story_id=47868099&ID=cnniw&scategory=Transportation:Highway&)

**13.**

*March 03, The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)* — **South Carolina Ports Authority joins pact to protect trade from terrorism.** In the world of cargo security, the South Carolina State Ports Authority (SPA) has received the equivalent of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. **After a four-month review by the Department of Homeland Security, the SPA became part of an anti-terrorism security pact Monday that members hope will set a standard for protecting internationally shipped goods.** Formally known as the Customs–Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C–TPAT), the agreement is open to all shipping carriers, ports and private businesses willing to enforce their security precautions at a higher standard. Thousands have already joined. "This is the benchmark for port security according to U.S. Customs," said Byron Miller, SPA spokesman. The pact requires members to regularly assess their security, plug gaps and encourage their business partners to do the same as part of a collective effort to guard the nation's shipping system against a terrorist attack. In addition to making security more uniform — a key advantage for any business, cargo carrier or port that joins the pact — is that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection service promises to place their cargo on a fast track for terminal inspection, officials said.

Source: [http://cnniw.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnniw/Story.nsp?story\\_id=47882669&ID=cnniw&scategory=Transportation:Shipping&](http://cnniw.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnniw/Story.nsp?story_id=47882669&ID=cnniw&scategory=Transportation:Shipping&)

14. *March 03, Daily Herald, (Chicago, IL)* — **Man saves woman from train.** A Lockport, IL, man was hailed a hero after pulling a woman to safety just moments before an Amtrak train struck her motorized scooter in Downers Grove, IL, Tuesday, March 2. **An unidentified elderly woman attempted to cross the Burlington Northern–Santa Fe Railway tracks on Main Street at about 2:30 p.m.,** said Doug Kozlowski, public information officer for the village. One of the wheels on her scooter got lodged between a rail and the crosswalk as an Amtrak train, en route to Chicago from Los Angeles, approached. An unidentified passer-by tried to move the woman and her chair off the tracks, Kozlowski said, but the handlebars broke off and the scooter remained stuck. "At that point, they realized a train was barreling toward them," he said. **With the train's horn blaring, the man pulled the woman out with only moments to spare, Kozlowski said. "He got her out of harm's way. Seconds later the train hit," Kozlowski said.** Pieces of the chair flew 800 feet, he said. No one was injured from the debris. Kozlowski, who was on the scene shortly afterward, said he was impressed by the good Samaritan. "Everyone was shaking his hand, telling him he was a hero," Kozlowski said.

Source: [http://www.dailyherald.com/dupage/main\\_story.asp?intID=38049\\_37](http://www.dailyherald.com/dupage/main_story.asp?intID=38049_37)

15. *March 03, FOX News* — **New terror group threatens French railway. A previously unknown terror group is threatening to blow up French railway tracks unless it is paid millions of dollars, authorities said Wednesday, March 3.** Information from the group led to the recovery on February 21 of an explosive device buried in the bed of a railway line near Limoges in central France, the government said. The bomb would have been powerful enough to break a track, it said. The government had earlier urged French and international media not to report the blackmail effort to protect efforts to establish contacts with the group. But the Interior Ministry released details about the threats in a statement Wednesday after the story leaked. The group "has sent several letters demanding an important sum of money in exchange for neutralizing several bombs it says it has laid, notably under rail lines," the ministry's statement said. Police do not believe the group has any connection to Islamic terror networks. **The Interior Ministry said the group identifies itself as AZF, the same initials as a chemical factory that exploded, killing 30 people, in southwestern France in 2001.**

Investigators believe that explosion was accidental.

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0.2933.113140.00.html>

16. *March 01, KITV-TV (Honolulu, HI)* — **Diver sighting near Coast Guard Station raises concern.** Authorities are on alert again after a diver was spotted near the Coast Guard station in Honolulu Harbor Saturday night, February 28. **The unauthorized diver was spotted about 10:23 p.m. near the Coast Guard Cutter Kukui.** The boat was docked where it normally is, at the Coast Guard station at Sand Island. **The incident comes just days after a Coast Guard sentry spotted a diver near the ship. The sighting prompted military and federal authorities to conduct a detailed search of the harbor.** Diving in Honolulu Harbor is not allowed. A woman fishing at Sand Island State Recreation Area told KITV 4 News that she saw some diving in the area a few hours before and found it rather out of place. "My understanding is they are not going to elevate the alert level. They are going to stay where they are, so that's an indication that the Coast Guard is not overly concerned. They are concerned obviously. It is a strange occurrence. They're on top of it, but they're not going to raise their alert level at this time," Gov. Linda Lingle said.

Source: <http://www.thehawaiiichannel.com/news/2884366/detail.html>

17. *February 26, The Patriot Ledger, (Quincy, MA)* — **Solar-powered radar counts traffic.** New roadside markers have popped up along Massachusetts's highways, including the South Shore's (south of Boston) major roads. **State highway officials have set up dozens of solar-powered traffic counters as part of a new five-year federal and state traffic study. "It's to identify commuting and transportation trends, where the traffic is going, so transportation planning can be done in a smarter fashion,"** MassHighway spokesman John Carlisle said. Using radar, the traffic counters can differentiate between cars, trucks and motorcycles. "What they basically do is count traffic volume, speed, and detect which lane a vehicle is in," Carlisle said. The counters are powered by solar panels. They are part of a \$50 million federal study of the nation's highway traffic patterns, done in association with the state highway departments.

Source: [http://cnni.w.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnniw/Story.nsp?story\\_id=47900738&ID=cnniw&scategory=Transportation:Highway&](http://cnni.w.yellowbrix.com/pages/cnniw/Story.nsp?story_id=47900738&ID=cnniw&scategory=Transportation:Highway&)

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## **Postal and Shipping Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Agriculture Sector**

18. *March 03, Dow Jones Newswires* — **Animal Diseases may take \$10 billion off 2004 international sales.** Bird flu and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) have seriously damaged international meat sales, with export bans cutting overseas sales of chicken and beef by one-third, according to an UN agency. Twelve governments facing export bans due to the diseases could suffer losses up to \$10 billion of the annual \$33 billion trade this year if the measures are kept in place, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization said. About 6

million tons of meat that normally would be exported are affected by these bans, the agency said in a statement. **Bans on beef imports from the U.S. and Canada due to BSE fears are cutting seriously into their \$4 billion, 1.6 million-ton annual exports.** These countries, along with 10 Asian governments, have also reported bird flu outbreaks, the agency said. They account for 4 million tons, or 50 percent, of the world's poultry exports, it said. Authorities in Asia have culled some 100 million birds to prevent further spread of avian flu.

Source: [http://www.agprofessional.com/show\\_story.php?id=23871](http://www.agprofessional.com/show_story.php?id=23871)

19. *March 03, Pork Magazine* — **Texas to test rapid FMD and CSF tests.** A rapid test for foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) will be studied at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, in cooperation with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). At the same time, researchers will evaluate a classical swine fever (CSF) test. Beginning this spring, researchers will test cattle and hogs with new assays to determine the two tests' accuracy in populations of disease-free animals. "We're testing a test, not testing for disease," says Garry Adams, the College of Veterinary Medicine's associate dean for research and graduate studies. **"The United States is currently free of these diseases, and such technological advances will improve our ability to respond to a foreign animal disease crisis should one develop."** At the moment, foot-and-mouth disease tests may only be performed at the U.S. Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York. The confirmation methods involve virus isolation, a procedure that may take up to a week to collect, ship to and secure results from Plum Island. **New, rapid, field tests would enable officials to quickly detect and stop disease spread.** The new experimental testing procedures will use "real-time" polymerase chain-reaction technology to identify genetic material specific to viruses that cause FMD and CSF.

Source: [http://www.porkmag.com/news\\_editorial.asp?pgID=675&ed\\_id=255\\_2](http://www.porkmag.com/news_editorial.asp?pgID=675&ed_id=255_2)

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## **Food Sector**

20. *March 03, Associated Press* — **Mouthwash chemical a food safety tool. The same chemical used in most mouthwashes for more than half a century has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use on poultry as a way to reduce food-borne illness.** Researcher Cesar Compadre and colleagues at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences spent 10 years attempting to prove the chemical compound CPC provides effective protection against salmonella, E. coli, listeria, and other germs. "CPC has been used since the 1930s in mouthwashes and people tried to use it for cleaning surfaces, but nobody thought to use it to clean meat," Compadre said. A Little Rock, AR, company, which developed CPC into a spray, announced March 3 that the FDA told the company it can begin marketing the product as soon as it is published in the Federal Register. **The chemical has no taste or smell, doesn't change the color of meat and only leaves noticeable residue on foods when they contain a lot of surface fat, Compadre said.**

Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/03/03/health/main603782.shtml>

21. *March 02, Knight Ridder Newspapers* — **More ailments among those who eat out. People who eat at restaurants, especially fast-food and deli-style sandwich shops, are far more likely to report getting stomach illnesses than people who stick to their own kitchens, according to a new survey by federal and state health officials.** The study presented

Tuesday, March 2, at the International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases, showed the difficulty in stopping foodborne illnesses, which strike 76 million Americans a year. While past food safety efforts have been aimed mostly at upgrading home kitchens, the latest survey, performed by epidemiologists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and seven state health agencies, suggests problems exist outside the home, too. **Their survey of 14,059 people found that those who'd eaten food prepared outside their homes in the prior week were 38 percent more likely to say they'd contracted some kind of gastrointestinal illness than people who'd relied solely on their own kitchens.** Fast-food restaurant customers and deli-style sandwich shop customers reported 50 percent more stomach bugs than stay-at-home eaters, the survey found.

Source: <http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/news/nation/8088819.htm>

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## Water Sector

22. *March 03, Olympian* — **Water officials stumped by bacteria source. Lacey, WA, officials say they might never know how coliform bacteria contaminated the southwestern sector of the city water system.** "We're trying to. We want to," said Peter Brooks, city water resources manager, adding that knowledge could prevent a repeat contamination. Toward that end, workers will take two more samples March 3 in the affected area. Results are expected by Friday, March 5, and will help determine if the bacteria has been flushed out of the system or if the problem persists. **Any confirmed trace of coliform bacteria in drinking water is treated seriously because it can signal the presence of E. coli and fecal coliform.** Follow-up tests confirmed there was no trace of E. coli or fecal coliform, officials said. City officials mailed notices to 7,700 water customers about the situation. Lab tests confirmed the bacteria in the water system on February 20.

Source: [http://www.theolympian.com/home/news/20040303/topstories/640\\_1.shtml](http://www.theolympian.com/home/news/20040303/topstories/640_1.shtml)

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## Public Health Sector

23. *March 03, Atlanta Journal Constitution* — **Animal diseases threaten humans.** To protect humans against constantly evolving new disease threats, public health will have to turn its attention toward the health of animals, experts said Tuesday. **Three-fourths of the new diseases that have menaced mankind over the past 20 years, and 11 of the 12 most dangerous bioterrorism agents, are animal diseases that have gained the ability to infect humans,** researchers said at the Fourth International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases in Atlanta, GA. Adequate surveillance systems for animal diseases potentially could have spotted Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), West Nile virus, and monkeypox before their spread became so devastating, said Lonnie King, dean of the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine. **"We need to have a system that merges surveillance for people, wildlife and animals so that, as these microbes are spread from one population to another, we will understand the nature of the spread and come up with prevention strategies,"** King said. Recognizing economic factors will be a critical component

of disease detection systems, other researchers said. Those range from tracking smuggled animals; not only exotic wildlife, but poultry that was moved around Asia to escape slaughtering orders; to recognizing the influence of developing world agriculture on the growth of new disease strains.

Source: <http://www.ajc.com/news/content/news/0304/03disease.html>

24. *March 03, Penn State Live* — **Better Internet usage could improve infectious disease reporting. Better disease reporting information on state health departments' Websites could help physicians more quickly and easily determine how, when, and where to report infectious diseases that may represent outbreaks or bioterrorism-related events**, according to a study by Pennsylvania State University and Pennsylvania Department of Health researchers. "Because nearly 80 percent of U.S. physicians use the Web, we feel it offers public health jurisdictions a great opportunity to facilitate disease reporting," said David Welliver, an information technologist with Penn State. **"Most of the 57 state and territory health departments that report diseases to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention already maintain Websites. However, we found that relatively few sites contained all the types of information important in facilitating infectious disease reporting, and in many cases the information was buried deep in the Website."** Of the 56 survey responses, 47 of the epidemiologists reported that they listed current reportable diseases on their Websites, and five indicated they offered a secure means for Web-based reporting by physicians.

Source: <http://live.psu.edu/story/5845>

25. *March 03, Infectious Diseases Society of America* — **Light-sensitive gloves reduce risk of germ transfer. A new type of disposable glove emits chlorine dioxide when exposed to light or moisture, killing potentially harmful microbes and making it ideal for use among health care and food workers, according to a new study.** The vinyl or polyethylene gloves contain microspheres that release chlorine dioxide, a water-soluble gas used to disinfect drinking water and processed foods. **Chlorine dioxide can destroy a variety of microorganisms, including E. coli, staphylococcus, and salmonella.** Infusing materials with chlorine dioxide to reduce the numbers of dangerous microorganisms is a concept that could be extremely helpful to a number of industries, according to Michael Barza, author of the study. Other medical devices, such as vascular and urinary catheters, if made with the gas-emitting microspheres, could prevent infections that might endanger already vulnerable patients, he said. Another benefit of the chlorine dioxide-impregnated gloves is that they won't lead to the advent of supergerms as antibacterial soaps and cleaners can. **"A nice characteristic of chlorine dioxide is that it does not breed resistance among microorganisms and has an incredibly broad spectrum of activity against viruses, bacteria, and fungi,"** said Barza.

Source: [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2004-03/idso-lgr030304.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2004-03/idso-lgr030304.php)

26. *March 03, USA Today* — **Old diseases fall off public health radar. Microbial killers such as drug-resistant malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV continue to ravage the world. Health experts say they know how to prevent and treat these diseases, but first they need to overcome complacency.** Public attention in the past two years has focused on new diseases, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, and new threats, such as bioterrorism, but scientists at the International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases say the lack of attention to older diseases is allowing them to flourish. In parts of the U.S. and other industrialized countries, "there is a perception that HIV is no longer a major threat," said

Ronald Valdiserri of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Malaria, which kills nearly two million people a year, has grown resistant to the most common drug used to treat it. Other drugs, more expensive and not as readily available, are effective, and efforts are underway to mobilize resources, said the CDC's Peter Bloland. Tuberculosis can be stopped if it is correctly diagnosed and treated. Yet each year, nine million people are newly infected and two million die, said Thomas Frieden, commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Source: <http://www.wtopnews.com/index.php?nid=106&sid=175439>

27. *March 03, American Society For Microbiology* — **Screening removes West Nile from blood supply. Screening of blood donations for West Nile virus by blood banks has likely prevented more than 1,000 transfusion-related infections during the second half of 2003, say researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** "This is an amazing success story," said Susan Montgomery, a researcher on the study. "The entire blood community went from the identification of a problem in the blood supply to the development and implementation of a solution nationwide within a year." In 2002, health authorities confirmed 23 cases of West Nile virus infection associated with blood transfusions. It is estimated that as many as 500 people with high levels of virus in their blood donated blood that year. To reduce the risk of transfusion transmission in the future, blood banks in the U.S. began screening donations for West Nile virus in July 2003. Over a six-month period, ranging from late June to December 2003 nearly six million blood donations were screened for the virus. Over 1,000 donations from more than nine states tested positive for the virus and were removed from the blood supply.

Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/03/040302081045.htm>

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## **Government Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Emergency Services Sector**

28. *March 03, The Boston Globe* — **Boston Transit Agency mulls shutting downtown subway station for convention.** Citing security concerns, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) officials want to shut down North Station to all commuter rail and subway traffic during the Democratic National Convention at the FleetCenter, several officials involved in the planning effort say, potentially snarling downtown traffic as convention-goers descend on Boston in July. The move would force North Station's 25,000 weekday rail commuters to change trains north of the city and connect with subways or buses, according to officials from four agencies and organizations involved in planning the convention, which takes place July 26 to 29. Subway trains would bypass the North Station stops on the Green and Orange lines, they said. **The officials said they made the decision in part because even if they elected to keep North Station open, a security problem during the convention, such as a bomb threat or violent protest, could compel the Secret Service to shut it down, causing commuter chaos.**

Final plans for the area around the FleetCenter are still being worked out by convention organizers, **but the closure of North Station is all but a certainty because of the risks of keeping a subterranean transit hub open while a high-security event takes place in the arena above it**, the officials said. North Station lies directly beneath the FleetCenter.

Source: [http://cnni.wyellowbrix.com/pages/cnni.w/Story.nsp?story\\_id=47905169&ID=cnni.w&scategory=Transportation:Mass+Transit&](http://cnni.wyellowbrix.com/pages/cnni.w/Story.nsp?story_id=47905169&ID=cnni.w&scategory=Transportation:Mass+Transit&)

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## **Information and Telecommunications Sector**

29. *March 03, eWEEK* — **Tenth variant of Bagle worm hits the Net.** Anti-virus researchers discovered the existence of Bagle.J, the tenth variant of the worm to hit the Internet, late Tuesday, March 2. Officials at Network Associates Inc. have rated the worm as a medium risk and said they saw 50 unique samples of Bagle.J in a 90-minute period. Bagle.I also surfaced Tuesday, with Bagle.H appearing Monday. **Recent speculation among anti-virus researchers that the creators of the NetSky and Bagle viruses may be engaged in some kind of competition or war has now apparently been proven true.** The virus writers have been leaving profane, derogatory messages for one another in the new variants of their respective viruses during the last few days, experts say. Like its predecessors, this version relies heavily on social engineering to entice recipients into opening the e-mail and infected attachment.

Source: <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1759,1542021,00.asp>

30. *March 03, Washington Post* — **FCC rule on local phone service rejected.** A U.S. appeals court yesterday struck down key elements of a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule governing local telephone competition. **If implemented, both sides in the debate said, the decision would put in jeopardy an eight-year-old system that allows competitors to lease phone networks owned by large local carriers at government-mandated rates.** In a 3-0 ruling by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, the judges wrote that the FCC lacks the authority to delegate responsibility for setting those rates to the states. The court also ruled the FCC had failed to prove that competitors in the local phone market are "impaired" without government-regulated access to critical parts of the phone network controlled by the regional giants. While the court rejected rules governing basic phone lines, **it upheld an FCC ruling that would allow broadband providers to build their high-speed networks without being forced to share them with competitors.** The regional phone companies, which have expressed reluctance to spend on broadband until their existing voice networks are freed from regulation, indicated yesterday that they'll be more willing to spend now in light of the ruling.

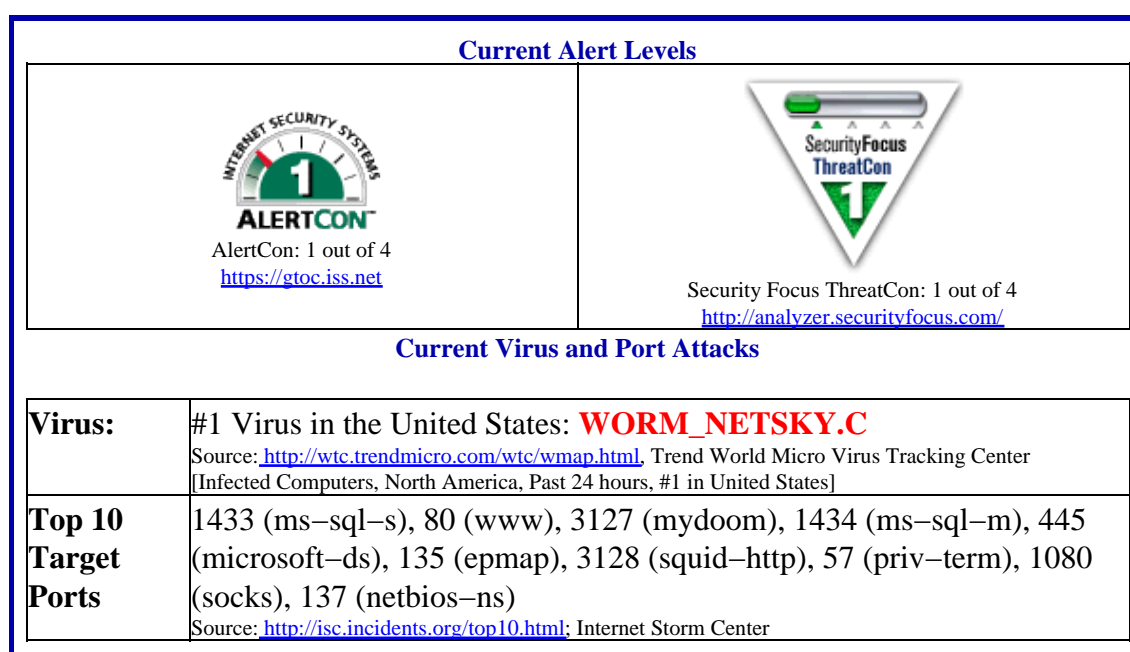
Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A24725-2004Mar 2.html>

31. *March 02, Washington Post* — **Senators try to smoke out spyware.** Three U.S. senators are tackling the growing problem of "spyware," software programs that track what people do online, alter their Web browser settings and turn their computers into unwitting Internet advertising generators. **The "SPYBLOCK" Act, which was introduced late last week, would make it illegal to use the Internet to install software on people's computers without their consent, and require companies that offer software downloads to provide more disclosure about what the programs do and what information they collect.** The bill also

would require Internet ads generated by the software to be clearly labeled. The bill would allow states to sue violators in federal court and would call on the Federal Trade Commission to impose fines and civil penalties under consumer protection laws. The bill probably will not cut down on the worst kinds of spyware — programs that exploit computer security flaws to hijack Internet connections or install "dialer programs" that force the computer to call expensive online 1-900 adult services — said Stewart Baker, an attorney in Washington, DC. In that sense, Baker said, it is a lot like the CAN-SPAM Act, which many experts said has done little to combat the problem of unsolicited bulk e-mail since it became law in January. The commission is scheduled to hold a public workshop on spyware, adware and other software on April 19.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23307-2004Mar 2.html>

### Internet Alert Dashboard



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## General Sector

32. *March 03, CBC Montreal (Canada)* — **Bomb scare at hotel. Dozens were evacuated from Complexe Desjardins in Montreal, Canada, Tuesday, March 2, after an explosive device was discovered in an elevator at the Hyatt Regency hotel.** Police would not call the device a bomb because it was not set to go off at a specific time. The area around Complexe Desjardins was cordoned off for much of the evening while police worked to defuse the package. "We made a first approach with a robot and basically detonated the package, causing damage to the elevator but no one was hurt, fortunately," said Robert Manseuto, a Montreal police spokesperson. **Police do not know who put the device in the elevator or why.**

Source: [http://montreal.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=qc\\_bom\\_b20040303](http://montreal.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=qc_bom_b20040303)

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